GOOD TASTE.

A Lecture,

DELIVERED BY

THE LORD BISHOP OF FREDERICTON,

BEFORE THE

Church of England Young Men's Society

OF THE

CITY OF SAINT JOHN, N. B.

A LECTURE,

DELIVERED BY

THE LORD BISHOP OF FREDERICTON,

BEFORE THE

Church of England Young Men's Society,

OF THE

CITY OF SAINT JOHN,

AT THE

HALL OF THE MECHANICS' INSTITUTE,

ON

FRIDAY EVENING, 23d JANUARY, 1857.

Subject, - - - - "Good Taste."

The Rev. Dr. Gray, one of the Patrons of the Society, in the Chair.

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Church of England Young Men's Society,

OF SAINT JOHN, N. B.,

ORGANIZED MAY, M.DCCC.LIV.

Patrons:

THE RIGHT REV. THE LORD BISHOP OF FREDERICTON.
THE REV. DR. GRAY,—Rector of Trinity Church;
THE REV. JOHN ARMSTRONG,—Late Rector of St. James' Church;
THE REV. GEORGE ARMSTRONG,—Rector of St. John's Church;
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INTRODUCTORY.

Among the principal instrumentalities employed by the Church of England Young Men's Society to effect the objects for which it was formed, is the delivery, from time to time, of Public Lectures. The Members have thankfully to acknowledge the kindness of the Clergy, and other friends, who have already favoured them with a number of highly interesting and instructive Addresses.

They are especially indebted to The Lord Bishop of Fredericton, for the kind and ready manner in which he has twice responded to their request to promote the interests of the Society in this way. His Lordship's last Lecture was so much appreciated and admired, not only by the Members themselves, but by the large audience who were present when it was delivered, that the Society, at its first meeting afterwards, determined by a unanimous vote to request its publication; and, His Lordship having acceded to this request, the Society has much pleasure in thus being enabled, in the following pages, to give it a wider circulation, and a more permanent character.

The members of the Society avail themselves of this opportunity to invite young men belonging to the Church of England, to join them in their efforts to increase and extend the vital religion and personal holiness, which the principles of their Church so eminently inculcate. The Society has been in existence about three years—it numbers 49 members in active connection with it, besides several who have left the City—it has a spacious and handsome room in Judge Ritchie's Building, where Meetings are held every Tuesday evening at 8 o'clock, for studying the Scriptures, reading essays and engaging in other exercises for mutual edification and improvement. This room is also open on Wednesday and Friday Evenings, from 7 to 9 o'clock, as a Reading Room. A Library of carefully selected Books has been commenced, which will be increased as rapidly as funds can be obtained for the purpose. It is the desire of the Members to open this Library, generally, to members of the Church as soon as it becomes worthy of their attention; and other means of usefulness will be adopted as the Society acquires strength and influence. Its members ask the countenance and aid of all their fellow churchmen in this City—while they do not cease to pray that under the Divine Blessing their Society may grow to be a useful adjunct of the Church to which they belong, and instrumental in the advancement of the glorious Gospel of its supreme Lord and Head, Jesus Christ.

TO THE MEMBERS OF

The Church of England Young Men's Society,

THIS LECTURE,

DELIVERED AND PUBLISHED BY THEIR REQUEST,

IS DEDICATED,

WITH THE MOST SINCERE WISHES FOR THEIR WELFARE,

By the Bishop of Fredericton.

February 6, 1857.

Preface.

The kind partiality of the Committee of the Young Men's Society having induced me to give this Lecture into their hands to be printed, some apology is, perhaps, due to the general reader for publishing what may not prove to be so entertaining or instructive as he may expect. But whatever opinion may be formed of it by less tolerant critics, I shall be well satisfied, if the young men who heard it are pleased. And, if, in the cultivation of their tastes, they shall find my suggestions useful to them, I shall be more than repaid. May the purity and innocency of their lives prove that they do not hear in vain.

JOHN FREDERICTON.

Lecture.

"Happy, if full of days—but happier far,
If, ere we yet discern life's evening star,
Sick of the service of a world, that feeds
Its patient drudges with dry chaff and weeds,
We can escape from custom's idiot sway,
To serve the Sovereign we were born to obey.
Then sweet to muse upon his skill display'd
(Infinite skill) in all that he has made!
To trace in nature's most minute design
The signature and stamp of power divine,
Contrivance intricate, expressed with ease,
Where unassisted sight no beauty sees."—*Cowper.*

It must be obvious that the word "Taste" is not here used in its simple form, as applied to the senses. It must be understood to mean an exercise of the intellectual, and often of the moral qualities of the mind; and it must be formed from reflection, experience and practice.

Taste, then, in this sense, is not a simple perception of the beautiful, or of the useful. If it were so, all tastes would be alike. When a green object is presented to the eye, or a sweet or bitter morsel is put into the mouth, all eyes in which the vision is not defective see that it is green, and all mouths taste that it is sweet or bitter. But it is otherwise with taste, as we understand the word in connection with our subject. If taste be a right perception of the BEAUTIFUL, the USEFUL, and the BECOMING, and of their mutual relations, it must be admitted that tastes will be likely to vary on all subjects in which beauty, utility, and propriety intermingle. Even in respect to a sense of beauty, the tastes of mankind differ almost as widely as the state of the thermometer in New Brunswick. All educated persons would prefer the beauty of the Apollo Belvidere or the Venus di Medicis, but there are those to be found, for whom large rolling eyes, distended lips, and a head covered with melted butter, would possess greater attraction.* Among the Esquimaux an appearance more revolting still in our eyes, would find admirers.

* See Perkin's descripton of an Abyssinian dandy—in travels in Abyssinia.

But though the question of taste thus often approaches the ludicrous, it has as much to do with the serious side of the matter. It affects all our social and domestic arrangements, it influences the arts, it intermingles with the great question of education, with literature in general, and it has much to do with religion.

And here it may not be useless to observe, how wonderfully God has been pleased to place utility and happiness within reach of all his creatures. Genius is the property of a very few amongst mankind. Yet genius is incapable of shewing its greatness but by serving others; and the possessors of the highest genius have been the hardest workers; often the worst paid and the worst treated, during their lives. It is a great mistake to suppose that persons achieve great acts by single strokes of genius; by intuition. The value of an object may be perceived by the possessor of genius sooner than by other men. But he who sees what other men are unable to discern, knows also what fatigue and labour are required to reach the object, and he is often ridiculed and opposed in the research: he passes away before the result is accomplished, and other men reap the fruit of his labours. Talent on the other hand is the inheritance of a far larger number of men, and good taste may be said to be within the reach of all.

Taste may be shown in furnishing a palace, or in the purchase of a cotton gown; in the arrangement of jewels in a diadem, or in the rose and honey-suckle which twine around the labourer's cottage, or in the condition of the interior of the cottage and its inmates. Here, indeed, our great Creator is, as he always is, in every good quality, our example. He has bestowed grace and elegance on the movements of the stars, and on the wing of the fly or the moth; on the cedar of Lebanon, and on the thistle-down; on the giant oak, and on the little "forget-me-not." So that young men need not suppose that they have nothing to do with good taste, because they are not rich. Taste is seen in the smallest things as well as in the greatest. Perhaps it is not likely to be shown in great matters, if small things be neglected.

If then the chief subjects of taste be UTILITY, BEAUTY, and PROPRIETY, not considered simply, but in their mutual relations, good taste will depend greatly on association and on judgment in the selection of objects.

Let us consider how much taste depends on association. The savage who obtains a precarious living by hunting in his native forests, has no taste except the desire for finery and toys. His mind has never been enriched by association with the past, by collision with intellects superior to his own, by the collected traditional refinement of other ages, nor has he

been taught to observe the wisdom and beauty of the works of God, except for purposes of daily subsistence. The paths of science are closed to him, the achievements of art are unknown. If his wants are few, his enjoyments are equally limited, and his mental operations are of the rudest and least enjoyable kind. And there are multitudes who live in civilized countries, who wilfully shut themselves out from the enjoyment of a thousand innocent pleasures which cannot be known without association. Consider, for instance, what is the course of a nation's growth and life, and of its progress towards refinement and comfort. Trace the whole course of our mother-country from its earliest infancy to the present highly developed state of intellectual energy. We see our ancestors at the first landing of Cæsar, half naked savages, without houses to shelter, or clothes to cover them; energetic indeed, independent and fierce, but neither industrious nor skilful in the arts, nor possessed of any intellectual advantages. A little further in their history we find them benefitted by the science and skill of their conquerors, enriched with small measure of learning, taught to construct houses, to clothe themselves decently, to exercise military discipline, and they derive higher advantages from a practical knowledge of the blessings of religion.

Still further, we find them again a conquered race, but more enriched by conquest. Their native language, struggling for supremacy, is formed into alliance with a foreign tongue, their institutions assume a more definite and settled form; grace and dignity are added to their manners, their arts receive a vast impulse, and their endless divisions are incorporated into something like the unity of a kingdom.

At another wide interval we find the internal differences of society, and its consequent convulsions, laying the foundations of liberty, broad and deep, giving an irresistible impulse to colonization, and augmenting widely the spirit of commerce.

Thus from age to age fresh accessions are made to learning, to civilization, to the arts of life, to the discoveries of science, till we build on the foundations which our ancestors raised with infinite pains and difficulty, and explore new and untried paths ourselves. You see we cannot stir one step in science or in art, and consequently in taste, without association. Our history lies in the past eighteen centuries, and the simplest instrument which we use has a record belonging to it of ruder times, of experiments without number, successful and unsuccessful, of the labours, conflicts, and sufferings of mankind.

The associations connected with the broadcloth which we wear, reach the times of Queen Elizabeth, the Low Countries, and the revocation of the edict of Nantes; the tea which we

drink is connected with the times of Confucius; the carpets we tread upon with the days of King James; the fragrant weed we use and abuse with Sir Walter Raleigh, the books we read with Strasburg and Mentz; the glasses through which we descry distant objects, with Galileo; the names of our common articles of food, dressed and undressed, with the Saxon bondman and his Norman master.

If we ascend a hill, and see new settlers taking possession of Crown lands, burning the refuse timber, cutting down and sawing what is valuable, previous to exportation, we stumble upon a thousand associations connected with the rights of the crown, the liberty of the subject, the advantages and disadvantages of free trade and protection, the rise in markets, the balance of trade, the best methods of colonization, the implements, methods, and advantages of agriculture, which brings us back I had almost said, to the days of Noah.

If, from some lofty eminence, we begin to admire the scenery beneath us, the undulations of the forest, the primeval mass of granite upheaved from the earth, the noble river with its tributaries, carrying our produce to the ocean, a number of new and equally important subjects rise up in succession before us. The forest reminds us of the curious questions connected with the growth of trees, and the original seeds found beneath their roots; the appearance of different rocks, lands us in the vast region of geological discovery. The flowing streams start the subject of hydraulic power, of navigation, and last, but not least, of steam. No sooner do we begin to take the measurement and define the boundaries of our farm, than we find ourselves in the midst of mensuration, geometry, and mechanics. Even the solitary tumulus which we occasionally meet with, takes us back to the times of Louis XIV., and by no remote inference to a period long anterior to his reign. Thus you see, good taste is governed and directed by a thousand insensible associations, of which we are at the time utterly unconscious, and of which many are always ignorant, but which certainly, though imperceptibly, influence the mind in its emotions.

And even our admiration of the works of God which appear obvious to every eye, is not the simple idea which we often suppose it to be. It is connected with associations of utility, beauty, and convenience, and no doubt with more sacred associations, derived from Holy Scripture, of which, at the moment, we have no distinct recollection.

Why is it, that the same earth and the same landscape, cultivated and uncultivated, yield to the mind a totally different impression? In the one instance the hill is equally lofty, but it stands alone. Its sides are covered with a thick growth of

what at a distance looks like moss, but which, on nearer inspection, turns out to be a mass of wilderness foliage. Not a house, not an inhabitant is to be seen. The only denizens of the place are the wild animals, which fly at our approach, and hide themselves in the thicket. In the other case, the hill is no loftier, but its proportions are better seen by comparison with objects of a different cast. A clearing has been made of trees too numerous for use, encumbering rather than beautifying the soil. The sunny slope has been converted into arable land, "the forest is become a fruitful field," crops of various kinds indicate the progress of labour, and hold out hopes of future wealth. A house is built; the whole spot assumes at once a habitable look; horses, oxen, poultry, pigs, and dogs, are discernible; indications to the eye, of labour, food, produce, skill, provision for the winter, and defence. A road is marked out, the symbol of communication, fellowship and intelligence, a neighbourhood begins to grow, a school house is built, a little spire rears its modest head, and intimates devotion to the great Father and Guardian of all. Shall I be pardoned for saying, that last, but not least, even a parson appears, riding to see a sick brother or sister, baptize a child, or marry a neighbour.

Thus view this same hill under these two different aspects, and how different is the feeling of the mind; produced by the soothing influence of association, which under the same heads I have enumerated, fills the mind with some degree of satisfaction, and insinuates a larger measure of hope. If then, taste even in natural objects, depend so much on association, it is obvious that good taste implies a selection of the best objects within our reach, by a careful study of the past, and a judicious reference to the present state of knowledge.

You will not, perhaps, be displeased, if I make a few brief remarks on the manner in which the history of the past may be employed. We are all influenced by the past in a far greater degree than we are willing to allow, but we must remember that the past history of mankind is a treasure given us by God for our present improvement. In referring to this history we ought to endeavour to form a cautious, charitable, and discriminating judgment, and we should be especially on our guard against two errors, equally pernicious, a *wholesale condemnation* and a *slavish imitation* of past ages.

To refer to the first, our ancestors and the ancestors of other nations, were men of like passions, beset by like temptations, and possessed of like virtues as ourselves, and in many respects neither much better, nor much worse. For the political institutions, or religious errors of their times, they were not wholly responsible, nor on the other hand, entirely irresponsible. But

they ought never to be judged by the standard by which we ourselves shall be judged, who live in times of liberty, of which they knew nothing, and under the shade of institutions many of which did not exist.

We should, therefore, be very cautious in our estimate of men and things gone by, especially when we depend for our data on the evidence of persons, who only saw a part of what was then going on, and who may have given a coloured and partial representation. What a strange idea of the English nation would be formed by one who, living in the year 2000, should read the accounts given by Mr. Russell, the Times correspondent, of the disasters in the Crimea, and should imagine that this was a fair sample of every matter of business conducted by the English nation. Or take another instance, suppose some eager advocate of Chancery Reform, and exposer of abuses in the Court of Chancery were to be selected as the exponent of the manner in which all the business of our Courts of Justice is transacted. Good taste, it is evident will avoid this common error. We should judge our ancestors as we wish to be judged ourselves, wisely, charitably, and with discrimination, but never condemning them, nor their institutions by wholesale, especially when our information on the subject is derived from secondary sources.

On the other hand, a servile imitation is as much to be censured, though perhaps in the present day, not so much to be apprehended. Whatever was noble, generous, or wise in the manners, morals, and institutions of the past, we should study, and as far as appears possible and useful, we may re-produce it. Yet if we have really caught the principle which we seek to adopt, we shall probably find it necessary to vary the detail. An absolute copy may be made, whilst the principle is entirely kept out of sight.

Mere servile imitation is characterized in our tongue by a very contemptuous but a very forcible and significant term, *apishness*, which exactly expresses the error which I am speaking of. The monkey imitates the actions of the man, but he can never penetrate the source from which those actions spring. He copies the gesture, but he knows nothing of the mind which prompts it. Thus bad taste either condemns in the mass all past ages as ignorant and foolish in comparison with itself, and raises a statute to its own praise, or with servile flattery, it apes the defects rather than the virtues of its original, and like the courtiers of the king of Macedon, sets one shoulder higher than the other, because Alexander's head was a little on one side.

As I before said, good taste is concerned with the *utility*, the *beauty* and the *propriety* of the things with which we have

to do; we are satisfied of their *utility*, for the purpose for which we seek to employ them: of their *beauty*, from their form and design, or from indications of pains and thought bestowed on their construction: of their *propriety*, as befitting the station and circumstances in which we are severally placed.

If I were speaking chiefly of religious matters, I should certainly add their *truth;* but as I am dealing at present with less sacred subjects, I shall be able to include under the three first named heads, all that is necessary for me to say.

I. Good Taste, in its selection of objects will consider their *utility*. The term utilitarian is sometimes used as a term of reproach, when it applies to those who dwell solely on the common, and reject the highest use of things, as when a man considers only how many persons a church will hold, without reference to the objects of worship, or what is the capacity of a building, without reference to lectures to be delivered or to the nature of sound; or when he prefers to have six cheap and bad pair of gloves, rather than to buy one good pair. It is, however, an abuse of the word. Real utility includes all uses, the highest, as well as the lowest, and use implies continuance as well as possession. But if we apply the test of utility to common life, we see that good taste would save us a multitude of unnecessary expenses, which fashion, caprice or apishness, (for it is nothing better,) imposes on us. How many groan under the yoke of fashions which they have not the manliness to resist! How many articles, and expensive articles of dress are useless, except to make people appear in forms for which nature never intended them! How many dishes regularly appear at dinners which only burden the stomach, clog the appetite, and (will the faculty forgive my impertinence?) fee the doctor!

But suppose we were to apply this test of utility to men's *speech*, *written words* and *general behaviour* to each other.

Might not many common errors be easily avoided by a consideration of *utility* only? One should not, I presume, do any dishonour to the prolific faculty of speech, if one were to say, that the stories which are often spun of interminable length and not very certain accuracy, might be usefully abridged, that mankind would be as charitable, and almost as wise, if they did not retail so freely all the absurdities which gossiping inventors put into circulation respecting the private business, religious views, supposed intentions of others, especially of persons with whom they are not well acquainted, and if they allowed themselves to measure their words rather by the cup than by the bucket, with a more direct view to utility than to talk. I need not say much of that celebrated but justly abhorred dictum, (if indeed it were not invented for its

supposed author,) that "language was given to conceal our thoughts." But one may easily see that a lie, measured by utility, would always be immolated on the altar of good taste. Not that a lie always fails of its object. It, no doubt, has its use. But it is never the use which its employer intends. Suppose the object to be gain, would any one who had a penny and a pound offered to him at the same moment, choose the penny? Yet the liar chooses the penny. The pound, which is good character, and a good habit of mind, to say nothing of higher considerations, escapes him; he has his penny, though it often proves to be a bad penny, but he never gains his pound.

Passing from words spoken, to those which are written, the measure of *utility* would sometimes lop off with a trenchant hand many of these.

Even of books which are not positively mischievous, how much which crowds the market is daily passing into oblivion, without leaving a single trace behind? And in how many instances do we feel sure that those who gather up the remains of great men, and without taste or discrimination, publish what their heroes would gladly have concealed, are doing the greatest dis-service to those whom they profess to honour? Thus Sir Isaac Newton is not suffered to enjoy his well earned and universal fame as a Philosopher, but he must now figure as a Divine, and all the crude thoughts on the Holy Trinity which passed through his mind, have been lately published rather to his discredit than otherwise.

Perhaps our old friend Boswell, that most entertaining and untiring gossip, might have withheld some of the minor frailties of his great patron without any sacrifice of truth. It is not necessary to a true picture of the great moralist and lexicographer, to know how voraciously he ate, or how Wilkes, whom he detested, conciliated his good will by asking him to "take a little more fat, a little of the lean, or a little more gravy." Yet all this is set down, nothing extenuated, in Boswell's lively narrative.

I know not that good taste is offended, because a sound moral is conveyed, by relating some of the Doctor's prejudices, as where he is described as paying a visit to his friend's garden and he finds him busily engaged in throwing snails over the wall into the garden of a neighbour. The Doctor remonstrated with his friend on this unneighbourly act, but when he replied, "Sir, the man is a dissenter;" "O then, said the doctor, throw away, throw away!" I hope no member of our church is so illiberal at the present day. But it might be a question with some whether it would not be useful to throw a few

snails into the garden of a Bishop. Bishops and Priests, we all know, deserve and should receive no pity from any quarter.

There is another error of which I have taken note and which good taste will always eschew. In writing controversial letters, it is astonishing how eager people are to fasten on each other the charge of falsehood, and to hurl against each other the most vile and contemptuous epithets in the very first onset. Now falsehood should never be alleged against another without the clearest evidence. All allowance should be made for the mistakes into which the most accurate are prone to fall, and no virtuous and charitable mind can feel a pleasure in the discovery, that his former friend, acquaintance or neighbour is a liar, and the eager desire to prove him to be such on the first sight of the matter, the fastening with tenacity upon every little circumstance which may admit of bad construction, and affixing to it the worst possible sense, is the mark not only of bad taste, but of a very unscrupulous mind. The time will come when one grain of real charity will be more valuable than all the clever bitter things written or spoken; and it is one sad effect of writing to please the lower class of minds, and to humour the caprice of the hour, that such writers appear to be entirely reckless as to what they say, or whom they wound.

Yet, I believe, it must be said in behalf of the daily press, that though they publish many articles on private character which are unjustifiable, that those which they suppress, and which are sent to them for publication, are ten times worse, and far more numerous than those which they allow to see the light.

I presume, if people measured these attacks by their utility even to their own party purposes, they would seldom publish them. The Duke of Wellington is a remarkable instance of a man who never, on any occasion, replied to one of the very numerous attacks made upon him by anonymous writers, and we know how he survived them all.

Another prevailing error deserves notice in respect to the use of words. The English language has attained to such perfection, by the growth of many centuries, and by its having been enriched by our intercourse with foreign nations, and by terms borrowed from the Latin or the Greek tongue, that there are few ideas of any importance, which may not be expressed in the vernacular tongue in a manner perfectly intelligible. Yet modern taste, not satisfied with genuine Saxon has invented a language peculiar to itself, eminently ungraceful, and only worthy of being noticed in order to be avoided. Such language may often be known by two characteristics, the length, I might say, the longinquity of its words, the circumlocution of its

phrases, and its constant use of what we must call, for want of a better epithet, "slang" expressions. Thus a man is no longer said to be in debt, but in a state of indebtedness; he is not a hearty good man, but a whole souled specimen of living and breathing humanity; place is pushed aside by locality; proceed by progress; thoughts by lucubrations; to say nothing of strange uncouth terms which require a dictionary of themselves. A curious instance of the effect of using a hard word where a simpler term would suffice, is shown in the general use of the word *commence* instead of begin. For now people often say, have you begun to commence? They might as well say, have you ended to terminate? This vicious style of speaking and writing is owing in a great degree to the laboured effort to produce great effects with small means; and when the mind has nothing to say worth hearing, it wraps itself up in words of prodigious length. This reminds me of a little anecdote I once heard, when I lived in the County of Cornwall. Two persons were conversing together on the subject of extemporaneous preaching, and one said to the other, who was a minister, "My friend, do you never lose the thread of your discourse?" "Yes," said the other, "sometimes I lose sight of my idea altogether." "And how," replied his companion, "do you proceed in such a case?" "Why," said the other, "when I find myself *without an idea*, I splash about, and get very warm, until I find it." And who knows but that the very part of the sermon in which the man was splashing about in search of his idea, might not be considered by many, the finest part of the discourse? I have known not a few writers, who proceed on this voyage of discovery, and as sure as you find a man without an idea, so surely will his words increase in length, in plain English, "much cry and little wool," much talk, and little sense. But enough of these absurdities

Let us now say a few words on the question of beauty of form and design, as one of the objects of *good taste.*

Beauty of form, elegance of combination, and harmony of color are evident in almost all the works of our great Creator, and we are generally most successful when we study nature and copy it.

In some parts of the animal creation, utility seems to be preferred to beauty, but in the majority of instances beauty and utility are united. And in the inanimate creation every part teems with beauty. As a perfect master of harmony never plays without melodious sounds, so, in a far higher degree, the Lord of Heaven and earth cannot move (as it were) without form, number, order, and harmony. And as our Saviour

tells us, one little flower is more magnificently arrayed than the richest monarch of ancient times.

And in these flowers every number that would cause an unharmonious division of color is avoided, and every number that causes the colours to blend sweetly and beautifully, produced; we find the trefoil, the cinquefoil, the sixfoil, the perfect number seven, the flower with twelve divisions, and most of them reducible to proportions of a cross within a circle, or segments of a circle; and the appearance of every star is that of a cross within a circle. But to say a few words on the beauty of these common things, as far as I am at all competent to speak of them, nothing can be more strikingly beautiful than the simplest and most ordinary flowers.

Let us take first the Ribes sanguineum. Can any thing be more exquisite than the arrangement and colouring of this flower? The principal stem is straight, and garnished with a few leaves for the most part arranged in triplets, and immediately above or below each of these is set the flower-stem, opening at the top into a pendant cluster of eight or ten of the most charmingly coloured and distinct flowers, each a cinquefoil, cup-like in form, the outside being a rich crimson, fringed with pencillings of black, the inner surface a delicate pink, with five little dashes of rose colour, corresponding to the five leaved stem, with a little crown of green in the centre to set off the whole.

Observe again the purple Petunia. Here the stem is bent into a most elegant curve, and branches off into side stems, with two broadish and well developed leaves of singular beauty, springing from the main stem at just intervals. On the side-stems are set the flowers. These are five-sided and of a lovely purple, whilst a small wheel of black in the centre, set off by a white eye, darts forth its rays to every part of the circumference, and gives great richness to the colour and distinctness to the shape.

Can any arrangement be more lovely than that of the Minulus Smithii? On a short thickish stem of green and pink, are set four pear-shaped leaves, with serrated edges of light green, divided by seven most graceful curves of a darker green, edged slightly with brown, and all seven meeting in a point at the upper part of the leaf. As a contrast to these fine forms, the flower springing from the main stem, forms itself into two or more cups of trumpet form, and of the purest yellow, with a bright crimson spot in the centre, and a kind of "milky way," if such an expression may be allowed, of crimson spots scattered over a portion of its surface.

Observe the beauty of the Hibiscus Lindleii. Here we have a stem nearly straight, entirely green, with pendant leaves,

three or seven together, spear-shaped, most perfectly and delicately outlined, but without variety of colour. But as a set off against this plainness, the brilliant ruby of the flower covers the stem (the leaves forming a background) like a little sun. The flower is a most perfect cinque-foil, each division having rays slightly shaded with black, and converging towards the centre, where they form a circle of the richest crimson purple, in which are little cells of crimson edged with white.

Observe again the Amaryllis Formosissima. Here again the stem is of a bulbous kind, green with a shading of brown; the leaves are half an inch broad, and from ten to twelve inches long, ending in a sharp point, with a channel down the centre. The flowers are divided into segments of the richest crimson, but greenish at the base. It has six stamens each, of crimson, crowned with a white cup.

On the beauty of the Passion Flower it is needless to dwell, but how strange and solemn is the significance of this so suitably named flower, as if, even in the works of His hands, He was ever mindful of the pains which He should suffer, and that He should not "go to His glory before He was crucified."

Again, what wonderful beauty is there in the grass! There is the rough and less elegant kind of the prairie, so valuable for cattle, and the waving, graceful Timothy, tinged with the slightest blush of varying colour, and the new mown grass so fragrant in its perfume, and the smooth shaven velvety turf, and the chamomile turf so aromatic in its scent, and the broad smooth grass of the vast rocky hill, on the sides of which huge shadows of a mile in breadth creep slowly along. There is also the tufted grass found in arid rocky places, feathery, of a most delicate tender colour, pink and blue; as if the Creator would especially array those places of the earth which would receive no culture at the hand of man.

What manifold beauty is to be seen in various kinds of corn! There is the towering independent stalk of Indian corn, and the more graceful and pure-coloured buckwheat, and wavy barley, and full-bearded and sunny wheat, "God giveth it a body and a colour as it pleaseth Him, and to every seed his own body."

What exquisite beauty lies in *water* and *light*, and in their mutual relations to each other. The clouds present an endless variety of form and colour, sometimes in streaks like the finest pencilling of the artist, or patterns from the pen, sometimes like balls of snow or crystals, sometimes piled up like the everlasting hills, disclosing huge cavernous recesses, lighted up with a bronze colour, like the interior of a volcano, sometimes resembling cities whose top reached up to heaven, then melting into spacious plains, sometimes so transparent,

that we would seem able to pierce them through with the hand, and then gathering suddenly into a thick, fierce and angry mass, bursting into forked flames, and threatening destruction. But what marvellous beauties lie hid in the clouds, just before and soon after rain! Sometimes the whole mass is broken into small fleecy particles with jots of the deepest blue between, the edges and projecting parts of each fleece glowing with burnished gold, or some part of the cloud is full of a light which seems almost heavenly and supernatural, whilst the rest is wrapped in sober gray. Then there is what Homer justly called "rosy-fingered morning," and the faint pink of the aurora borealis, with its pyramids of light shooting up, and ever changing places.

On my visitations I have sometimes travelled through rain all the morning, and just before sunset, have reached the borders of the river St. John. Then suddenly the storm would break away to the eastward, and on the western side of the river the sun bursting forth, would clothe the hills and trees and plants, and even the grass with a mist of burnished molten gold, so that each object stood out distinctly, and seemed to come close to the eye, glorious as the streets of the New Jerusalem, which is said to be "all gold, transparent as glass." Meanwhile the river, darker than ever, from the clouds which overcast its waters, murmured sullenly along, like that dark stream which we must all cross to pass to those golden streets and regions of unclouded sunshine, sullied by no impurity, never overcast by clouds of doubt and sin and sorrow. You all remember the poet's beautiful line,

"How sweet the moonlight sleeps upon this bank."

But sweeter still it sleeps upon the lake, when all its brightness seems concentrated in one beautiful spot in the distance, whilst every thing on the surrounding hills is high, and dark, and still. What can be more beautiful in colour than the full moon on the sea, as the waters laugh and dance and play with its beams; or than the sunsets on our own river, with ever-changing hues of orange, green, and purple, as if the whole depth of the water were coloured; or than the indigo mist that rises from the little mountain stream, which thread-like winds its way among the hills, and is gradually lost to sight;—even as the silent prayer from a poor man's heart finds its way into the ocean of God's love.

These are a few of the beauties of Nature, which I have described as I have seen them, but which require a far keener observer, and a livelier pen to do them justice.

Now do you imagine that these innumerable beauties of order, harmony, form and colour, are bestowed upon mankind

for no purpose? Was it intended by the Creator of these magnificent images, that we should walk about with our eyes fixed on dusty, and dirty streets, ill ventilated and drained, and resort to the dram-shop and the dice-table for sources of amusement? Was it intended with the glorious sun above us, "the vast hills in fluctuation fixed," around us, the lake and the river, and the ever-changing sea, and the fresh fountain, and the graceful many coloured flowers on every side of us, that we should neglect all these pure sources of inexhaustible delight, and spend our time wholly and entirely in money getting, and in pampering these poor bodies till they can hold no more, and in saying foolish things to each other, or vile things of each other, while unnumbered sources of happiness lie at our very feet, waiting to be gathered, offering themselves "without money and without price?" No, surely! For observe, how God bestows these pleasures on all in some degree. It requires a great outlay of money to possess large gardens, and hot houses, and nurseries of flowers, and artificial lakes, and great mansions, and handsome furniture. But it requires no money to see beauty in the sea, and the river, and the crops, and the wild flowers, and to cultivate these pure tastes, and the cultivation of beautiful plants requires pains and labour, rather than money. God has given these things to all men for many uses: 1st, That all may enjoy the greater part of them, and form their tastes on the model of Nature, and refresh themselves with the joyous sight. 2d, That those who are richer than others may find a pleasure, not in heaping money together, and dying worth so many thousand pounds, or in giving it to their children to waste in ridiculous or profligate ways, but may cultivate tastes which are useful to their fellow creatures and gladden the heart of the poor toil worn labourer. Thus a rich man, by imitating the bounty of his Master, may make himself a public benefactor, and win himself a good name for many generations. He may drain a city, and so restore health to thousands; he may build and endow an hospital, and heal thousands; he may erect public gardens, and minister innocent pleasure to thousands; he may erect public baths, and minister to the cleanliness of thousands; he may erect some great public building for ornament and utility; or, if he desire the spiritual welfare of men, he may build and endow a Church, or a Mission. Great riches are not given men for guinea-subscription lists, but that they may make to themselves a lasting monument in the hearts of the people We desire not monuments of brick and stone on the walls of churches, but great and useful works in which every man is at liberty to consult his own taste, provided it take a wise and judicious direction.

Good Taste will walk abroad into the works of the God of

nature with a careful and observing eye, and will try to imitate those previous works, as far as it can, and will study the works of those persons who have most successfully imitated Nature.

Let me now, briefly apply these principles to one or two practical matters with which all mankind are familiar, first to Architecture, and secondly to Music. In laying out a town, it is common in North America to avoid the crooked lanes and devious ways of our ancestors, and to provide wide and spacious streets. So far so good, but it is not breadth or length only which gives a street a fine commanding appearance. The houses, if not of uniform height, should certainly not present an astonishing difference, one mansion towering to the skies, and the next a shanty of eight feet from the ground. The colouring and ornament of a house require great consideration. It is a safe, as well as an ancient rule, that nothing should form part of the decoration of a building, which is not also part of its construction; and in decoration it is as necessary to guard against too much, as against too little, above all against a servile imitation. Nothing looks poorer or more mean than little bits of some magnificent building taken from books, and stuck up in the middle of a house, with which they have nothing in common, nor is it desirable that every house should be an exact copy of its florid and showy neighbour.

Nothing more clearly proves the immense superiority of ancient designers of buildings than the inexhaustible fertility of their imagination. In England, it would be easy to point out five thousand good churches, yet you would not find one of them exactly like the other, and of all the ancient churches which I ever visited, I do not recollect one which is a copy of another. Each was a separate real design from the brain of a designer. It is needless to say how different a case North America generally presents.

Then as to color. It almost seems as if men either had no eyes, or lived in a colourless world. Their houses glare with white paint, and the same poor idea is repeated again and again, without variation, while there is not a hill, nor a lake, nor a flower which is not without its variety. Generally speaking, if you look on a lovely landscape, the house is the only positively ugly object in it. Yet there it stands, quite square, hard and angular, with its one red door, and its two green widows, its two low parlours and its four little closets, nature all various and charming, and man with his one type of everlasting ugliness repeated without end, like a set of little boys copying pot-hooks and hangers,—pot-hooks and hangers, and nothing else for evermore.

To pass to another sister art, that of *Music*. Here we are making some progress, but great care is needed to form a sound

taste in this branch of the arts. I do not, you will observe, confound good taste with uniform taste; but good taste can only be formed on good models, by study and observation, and no man ought to pretend to condemn what he does not understand, on a first hearing. I lay down this rule for myself. If I do not admire a great work of Handel or Mozart, when I first hear it, (and I honestly confess there are some things I have not yet learned to admire,) I set it down to my own ignorance and stupidity. I try to remember the instance of the Persian going into an English Church and seeing the congregation all standing up and turning round when the organ began to sound, he said that he had seen these people all worshipping a great ugly painted idol, stuck up on a pedestal at the end of the room, which from innumerable mouths, emitted the most frightful groans, and the effect on his mind was so dolorous and horrible that he rushed out of the building in disgust. Some such creature I fancy myself to be, when I criticize Handel or Mozart. What do I know, I say to myself, of the thoughts that burned in their breasts, and the harmony that danced before their eyes? No more than a bat knows of the sun, or an owl of the beauty of the tree in which it goes to roost. *Verbum sat*, as the proverb hath it. Study and observe, and then play the critic if you will, but even then with modesty, and with the respect due to genius.

And not to fatigue you, I must now pass on to another part of Good Taste, without which neither will be useful or beautiful, nor will beauty be combined with utility. This 3rd element is *Propriety*. For I need hardly say that a thing may be both useful and beautiful, yet not becoming our place, position, or fortune, and therefore may be unsuitable to us.

Good Taste will always aim at reality, and will avoid tinsel and meretricious ornament, which neither becomes the person nor the subject. Fine houses beyond the means of the people who live in them, fine clothes which are never paid for, and fine words which have no truth nor hearty good will at the bottom of them, good taste and good sense will eschew.

And there is too much reason to fear that we need wholesome warnings on this subject. What frightful discoveries are continually made of frauds the most extensive, injurious, and heartless, of swindling the most clever and the most audacious, prompted apparently by the wish to outshine others, and to live beyond one's proper station.

What preposterous exhibitions are made, of baby shows; of every kind of folly and extravagance, from the thirst after novelty and excitement; what innumerable bankruptcies are brought about by the wish to be fine, and to make a great figure in the world. And we have too much reason to lament

that this want of propriety is carried into more sacred subjects, and gives rise to a thousand evils. We see it in gross irreverence and trifling with holy subjects, in using the words of the Almighty to point a jest, in familiar addresses to God in prayer, as if he were our equal, and in a multitude of minor matters, which I pass over, lest I should be thought fastidious or censorious.

Good Taste in religious matters involves indeed the highest moral qualities. It supposes that we perform reverentially and thankfully all we do or say in presence of our Maker, and it demands that suppression of selfish thoughts and selfish sins, which it is easier to recommend than to practice.

I shall not, I trust, be travelling out of the record, if I observe that the Liturgy of our Church, amongst its many excellencies, numbers especially that of Good Taste: yet it is as conspicuous for the errors which it avoids, as for the beauties which it contains, and that it can no more be appreciated by a vulgar, irreverent, and undisciplined mind, than the worth of a jewel can be valued by a swine.

For, the higher any production stands in order of merit, the more taste and discernment does it require in the person who uses it. A vulgar man can no more *read* the Liturgy well than he can properly understand it: he will fall short of its refinement and elevation, and he will place the emphasis on the wrong words, he will dislocate every sentence, and reduce it to the chaos and confusion of his own brain.

Indeed nothing brings a man's taste to the test sooner than his reading, and those who huddle up their words as if the only object were to get to the end as fast as possible, seem to present to us a picture of the collision of two trains upon a railway. The members of the sentence, like the unhappy passengers, instead of being landed at the period of their journey with a safe and equable motion, are torn asunder, and hurled into the air with a rude and tempestuous violence, having neither sense, nor motion, nor spirit left.

The judicious reader neither grates upon your ear, nor offends you by an uneasy, shuffling pace, but after pausing occasionally to allow you to admire the prospect, carries you gently along with a sense of a safe and pleasant journey; or if he penetrate into more sacred places, leaves you with a deep and solemn impression, desirous to be left alone to meditate on the scenes through which you have passed.

But I must take care, that, whilst discoursing on Good Taste, I do not myself offend, and by undue length, become an example to be avoided rather than to be imitated. I must therefore close with a very few words by way of summary.

It may give a Christian tone to the whole subject we have

been considering, if we observe, that our taste will never be perverted, when we follow the footsteps of the Great Creator. Accurate observation and attentive study of His works will furnish us with the best models, the noblest designs, and the most exalted sentiments. Order, utility, beauty and harmony pervade them all. Nor can our perceptions of propriety in matters which affect our social intercourse, or our personal habits, be regulated by a more just model than the example of Him, who in all His words and ways, was simple, engaging, and unostentatious in His deportment, full of reverence and holiness in His demeanour, just and yet tender, pure, yet affable and courteous. Guided by this pattern we shall avoid many an error into which even gifted men may fall. We shall lend a grace to the most ordinary actions by our manner of performing them, we shall shun unnecessary ostentation and display, we shall appreciate all that is noble, generous and elevated among our fellow creatures, whether they belong to past generations or to the present, we shall fly from the haunts of vice and sordid dissipation to the charms of Nature, and in admiring Nature we shall be found "commercing with the skies," and communing with Nature's God.

In our household arrangements, in our dress, in our social festivities, we shall shun the extremes of extravagance and meanness, and look upon all things, great or small, as given us that we may discharge the duties belonging to them in the best possible manner. Especially, we shall seek to lead the mind of youth from the love of all that is selfish, sensuous and degrading, and to give them opportunities of enjoying real beauty in this beautiful world by means of natural and innocent pleasures;—pleasures which are conducive to their physical and moral health and intellectual growth, and which leave no sting behind them.

Thus, while we carefully guard the sacred deposit of truth from all adulteration, and found our religion strictly and soberly on God's most holy Word, Good Taste will preserve that religion from sourness, and self complacency, and will make it gracious and acceptable to all who have sufficient candour to appreciate our intentions, and generally useful to the world.

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